California Department of Education

California School Recognition Program

Rubric for Scoring
2005 Distinguished Middle School Applications

This rubric is organized into seven themes. Each theme includes key concepts and a comprehensive set of quality statements that reflect a consensus of the education community about the elements that should be present in an exemplary standards-based middle school. Each theme, from its perspective, focuses on how all students are provided access to, and are actively engaged in, a high quality standards-based instructional program. Correspondingly, the rubric reflects priorities in California's statewide accountability system for public schools. Discussion questions for each theme are provided in the the Middle School Application Appendix.

The rubric will be used to evaluate 2005 Distinguished Middle School Applications based on a four-point scale (4 signifies high quality). Each level of the rubric is designed to be a holistic description, not a checklist. Evaluators will assign the score that *most closely resembles* the information provided in the application as a whole. Schools selected for recognition typically receive scores of level 3 or 4 in each rubric area. To receive those scores, schools must provide specific examples and other evidence in their responses. *Applicants are not expected to receive scores of level 4 in all areas. In some instances, level 4 describes an ideal toward which schools are encouraged to strive.* Schools may also choose to use the rubric as a tool for self-assessment.

Theme 1 - Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Monitoring School Effectiveness

Key Concepts: * school community collaboration using California content standards about what students must know before high school * current research on adolescent developmental needs * Single School Plan (SSP) coordinated with Local Education Agency Plan (LEAP) * school plan addresses strategies for all students * school monitors student achievement using classroom, school, district, and state assessments aligned to standards * data disaggregated * data used by teams of teachers to improve classroom practice * school commitment to student success * interventions * readiness for high school * array of strategies to communicate with families and community * School Accountability Report Card (SARC) readily available on Web site *(Reminder: Discussion questions for this theme are provided in the Middle School Application Appendix.)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how representatives from **all** segments of the school community—teachers, administrators, staff, parents, community members, and students—using the California content standards and performance levels, collaborate to establish a clear vision of what students must know before entering high school. Examples show how implementation of the vision is based on current research on adolescent development and effective instructional strategies and reflects the cultural diversity of the students. The vision statement is revisited and updated annually.	Evidence shows how school staff, school site council, and selected parents work together to decide what students are expected to know before entering high school, based upon state-adopted standards and performance levels. Examples include how the vision reflects current research and practices and acknowledges the cultural diversity of the students. The vision statement is reviewed and updated periodically.	There is evidence that there is a process for administrators and some teachers to determine what students should know and be able to do. The vision statement is generally consistent with the curriculum and is occasionally reviewed.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding a vision for students. The school has a statement of philosophy and goals that is kept on file at the school. It may not be consistent with the curriculum or reflected in day-to-day operations.
Evidence shows how the school has developed a Single School Plan (SSP) that is fully coordinated with the district's Local Education Agency Plan (LEAP). The SSP describes specific strategies for how **all** students will attain the "proficient" level or above in English-language arts (ELA) and math using State Board-adopted instructional materials. Standards are in place for English-language arts, math, science, history/social science, and English Language Development (ELD), as well as other disciplines (visual and performing arts, health, physical education). Examples show how the SSP is used to monitor, evaluate, and sustain the overall program effectiveness.	Evidence shows how the SSP coordinates with the LEAP. The SSP describes strategies for how most students will attain proficiency in ELA and math using State Board-adopted instructional materials. Standards are in place for ELA, math, science, history/social science, and ELD. Examples show how the SSP is used to improve achievement.	There is evidence that there is a process for developing a school plan each year. The district has adopted state standards in ELA, math, science, and history/social science. Work is under way to develop local standards for ELA, math, science, history/social science, and ELD.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding expectations for students. The district has adopted state standards in ELA, math, science, and history/social science.

Theme 1 - **Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Monitoring School Effectiveness** *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how the school frequently monitors the achievement of **all** students using state, district, and classroom assessments aligned to the California content standards. Data are disaggregated by student characteristics—primary language, poverty, gender, ethnicity, Title I participation, special education, GATE, etc. Examples demonstrate how results are used by grade level and departmental teams to improve classroom instructional practices; provide appropriate interventions; modify structure and schedules; and reallocate fiscal, personnel, and material resources consistent with school plan goals for student achievement.	Evidence shows how teachers and some members of the school community examine state and local student and school assessment data to make instructional and budget decisions regarding the school program. The data are disaggregated by selected student characteristics. Examples show how adjustments to the school plan are based on student assessment results and are consistent with the school plan goals for student achievement.	There is evidence that some teachers examine student data to modify and improve their classroom instruction. There is minimal evidence that the results of the analysis are incorporated into adjusting the school plan.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding student assessment. Administrators and selected teachers review student and school assessment data. Disaggregation of data may or may not be discussed. Some teachers may not use data to make instructional decisions for their own classes.
Evidence shows how the entire school community is committed to the vision that **all** students will reach the standards and demonstrates how **all** students will be ready for high school and for passing the high school exit exam.	Evidence shows how administrators and most teachers support a vision of improving student achievement in preparation for entering high school.	There is evidence that the school generally values student achievement and works to improve it in preparation for entering high school.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding expectations for students in preparation for entering high school.
Evidence shows how the school's vision statement and the results of the monitoring and evaluation process are communicated to parents and the community through an extensive array of communication strategies, in a variety of languages (as appropriate to the population), which extend or enhance the School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The most recent SARC is readily available on district's Web site and contains additional information on school programs.	Evidence shows how the vision statement and the results of the school evaluation process are communicated in the SARC to families and other representatives of the school community. The SARC is readily available on the district's Web site.	There is evidence that a process for communication reaches some groups of parents and the greater community. The SARC is available on request.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding strategies for reporting school evaluation results to families and the community.

Theme 2 - Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Student Assessment

Key Concepts: * classroom, grade level, school, district, and state assessments linked into a local California content standards-aligned system to improve student achievement * school uses State Board-adopted instructional materials * school frequently monitors achievement of all students and uses information to make improvements in classroom instruction * teams of teachers collaborate to use and analyze student assessments to design lessons * homework is used to extend student learning * assignments for outside-of-class programs strongly support in-class work * teachers analyze and share student work * students take responsibility for their learning and analyzing their own work * report cards are aligned to progress toward meeting California content standards * families are informed about their students' progress toward achieving standards *(Reminder: Discussion questions for this theme are provided in the Middle School Application Appendix.)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how a local, standards-aligned, assessment system links classroom, grade level, school, district, and state assessments and how assessment data from State Board-adopted instructional materials or standards-aligned supplemental materials are central to the system. Examples illustrate the means by which student and school progress toward achieving the California content standards is measured and analyzed, and how it is based upon professional staff consensus. Examples also include how achievement data are analyzed at all performance levels, including "below basic" and "far below basic."	Evidence shows how a local assessment system is being developed. Examples show how student and school progress toward achieving California content standards is measured and analyzed, and how it is based upon professional staff consensus.	There is evidence that teachers collect assessment information in a variety of ways. Teachers are in the process of reaching agreement about what students should know at each grade level.	Minimal evidence is provided that teachers agree about what students should know and be able to do.
Evidence shows how the achievement of **all** students is monitored frequently using state, district, and classroom on-demand and curriculum-embedded assessments aligned to the California content standards. The school uses assessment information to improve instructional practices so that **all** students will be able to achieve at the "proficient" level or above. Examples in English-language arts (ELA) and math show how teachers work collaboratively to use assessment information to plan and modify curriculum, instruction, and lesson delivery; to assign homework; and to coordinate instruction with in-school and/or after-school interventions and tutoring. Examples also show how teachers frequently share and analyze student work with colleagues using standards-aligned rubrics to evaluate student proficiency.	Evidence shows how the school uses assessment information to improve student achievement. Student progress toward the standards is actively monitored. Assessment information is used to improve instructional practices and increase student achievement. Examples show how teachers use assessment results to plan and modify curriculum and lesson delivery on an ongoing basis, how teachers coordinate appropriate interventions, including homework, and how teachers analyze student work with colleagues. Examples are provided in ELA.	There is evidence that individual teachers or particular departments monitor student achievement in crucial areas. Teachers in some grade levels or subject areas periodically use student achievement information in planning curriculum and instruction.	Minimal evidence is provided that student performance is linked to instruction. In general, curriculum and instruction may operate independently from student assessment.

Theme 2 - Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Student Assessment *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how **all** students know what is expected to meet grade-level standards and how to achieve at the "proficient" level or above. Examples illustrate how students frequently evaluate their own work against standards-aligned criteria, reflect on their own progress, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Examples illustrate how student report cards are aligned to standards and address social, emotional, and physical development.	Evidence shows how the school communicates grade-level expectations to students and how students are responsible for producing quality work and being productive. Report cards address student progress toward achieving standards.	There is evidence that individual teachers use rubrics and exemplars in the classroom. Some students analyze their own work against standards-aligned criteria.	Minimal evidence is provided that standards-aligned criteria are used to gauge student progress. Teachers may depend wholly on letter grades to inform students about their strengths and weaknesses.
Evidence shows how families routinely receive information about the standards and frequently receive updated information about the extent to which their students are meeting grade-level standards. Examples show how staff regularly communicates information to families about what is expected for proficient work based on state-adopted performance levels. Examples interpret for families the significance of assessment results. If English learner (EL) students are present, their families receive this information in their primary language(s).	The school is working to effectively communicate timely assessment information to families. Examples show how efforts are made to communicate to families about students' results and to provide information in the families' primary language(s) as needed.	There is evidence that communication to families is frequently negative in focus (students failing or needing additional support). Information is provided in primary languages as needed.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding reporting individual student assessment results to families. EL students are present, but the issue of communication in primary languages is not addressed.

Theme 3 - Academic Excellence: Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Key Concepts: * balanced, comprehensive standards-aligned core curriculum in all areas provided to all students * school's program reflects students' developmental needs * all students supported to have success in most rigorous classes * exploratory and elective classes * articulation with feeder elementary schools and destination high schools * teacher collaboration across grade levels * master schedules, blocked time, and flexible scheduling * schedule modified to support longer, more intense classes for students below grade level * balance between independent and collaborative work * homework used to support and extend learning * all students provided with State Board-adopted, standards-aligned instructional materials * real world experiences * high-quality library media program * technology used to enhance learning for all students *(Reminder: Discussion questions for this theme are provided in the Middle School Application Appendix.)*
Note: This section will be weighted double in the scoring process.

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how a balanced, comprehensive standards-aligned core curriculum is provided to **all** students in English-language arts (ELA), mathematics, history/social science, science, physical education, health education, and visual and performing arts. Evidence shows how teachers work together to align instruction to the knowledge and skills addressed in the standards and to State Board-adopted materials, and how the instructional program reflects a thorough understanding of the developmental needs of middle grade students based on current research on best practices for young adolescent learners. Examples address ELA, math, and at least one other curricular area.	Evidence shows how a comprehensive core curriculum is provided to students. Examples show how curriculum is aligned to local and state standards in some subjects and how teachers work together to align instruction to standards and State Board-adopted materials. Examples in ELA and math show how the instructional program is based on research or how teachers build instruction for the developmental needs of students.	There is evidence that there is a process for aligning core curriculum to local and state standards. The core curriculum is provided to most students. Curriculum planning is based upon some use of current research.	Minimal evidence is provided that curriculum alignment to standards has begun. It is not clear whether a core curriculum is provided to all students. Some students may receive a different curriculum based upon perceived ability levels.
Evidence shows how **all** students are provided opportunities to be successful in rigorous courses, particularly in math and science that are the precursors to postsecondary education. Examples show how **all** students have opportunities to participate in exploratory and elective courses to augment the core curriculum.	Evidence shows how most students are provided with opportunities to be successful in rigorous courses. Examples show how many students have opportunities to participate in exploratory and elective courses.	There is evidence that some students are provided with opportunities to participate in rigorous, exploratory, or elective courses.	Minimal evidence is provided that many students participate in rigorous, exploratory, or elective courses.
Evidence shows how the standards-based core curriculum is articulated across grade levels, with feeder elementary schools, destination high schools, and after-school and extended-day programs. Examples in ELA, math, and one other subject area address how teachers collaborate to share student data and articulate with before- and after-school intervention programs.	Evidence shows how there is articulation of some core curricular areas with feeder elementary and destination high schools. Examples, in at least ELA and math, show how teachers collaborate to use student data and plan interventions.	There is evidence that articulation may be limited to registering students in classes. Intervention programs may be initiated only after students have arrived at destination campuses.	Minimal evidence is provided of articulation with feeder elementary or destination high schools. Student intervention programs are not addressed.

Theme 3 - Academic Excellence: Curriculum and Instructional Practices *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how the master schedule provides for the use of blocked time or flexible scheduling and how the core instructional program is restructured (into smaller, more intense classes; longer instructional blocks; etc.) to provide timely and effective in-school or after-school interventions for students performing below grade-level standards. Examples show how these structured interventions ensure that before entering high school, **all** students will be approaching their grade level in ELA and math.	Evidence shows how the master schedule provides time to support students needing intensive intervention classes. Examples show how interventions focus on ELA and math skills necessary for beginning high school successfully.	There is evidence that some class sections are scheduled so students may participate in intensive ELA or math intervention classes.	Minimal evidence is provided that the school adjusts its master schedule to meet the learning needs of students.
Evidence shows how teachers use a variety of methods to meet the learning needs of **all** students. Examples illustrate how a balance is achieved between independent and collaborative work, teacher-directed and student-directed activities, and applied and theoretical projects to extend and enhance deeper learning. Evidence shows how homework is used to support and extend classroom instruction and how inter-disciplinary projects, service learning, and real-world experiences are incorporated into the curriculum.	Evidence show how a variety of instructional methods is being used in classrooms and curricular areas and how instructional groupings vary with the nature of the task, including working in groups and independently. Examples explain the role of homework and how real-world experiences are incorporated into the curriculum.	There is evidence that a limited variety of instructional methods are used in some classrooms and in some curricular areas. Staff is working on strategies to provide a greater variety of learning experiences. Homework is assigned in most classes.	Minimal evidence is provided that instructional methods vary from lecture, whole-group instruction, and traditional ability groupings.
Evidence shows how **all** students are provided with State Board-adopted, standards-based instructional materials in all core classes. Examples illustrate the relevance of current research, how school community members examine materials to determine their instructional effectiveness, how materials reflect the diversity of California's population, and how community resources are used to enhance the core curriculum with real-world experiences.	Evidence shows how all students are provided with State Board-adopted, standards-based instructional materials. Examples show how instructional materials are selected, how community input is incorporated, how instructional effectiveness is evaluated, and how real-world experiences are incorporated into the core curriculum.	There is evidence that many students are provided with standards-based instructional materials adopted through a legally compliant process.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding the adoption of standards-based instructional materials. Some teachers may be involved in the process.
Evidence shows how a high-quality library media program is an integral part of teaching and learning. The library/media center is staffed with a credentialed library media teacher and support staff. The library collection is sufficient to meet the needs of **all** students and fully supports the State Board-adopted frameworks in all curricular areas. Examples demonstrate how library/media technology assists the learning needs of **all** students, including those with learning disabilities and physical challenges. Examples include how the library/media center is flexibly scheduled to be available to students and families beyond the regular school day.	Evidence shows how the library media program is an important part of learning activities and is operated with a full-time staff, current technology, and appropriate learning resources. Examples show how accommodations are available for students with special needs and how the library is available to students and families beyond the regular school day.	There is evidence that the library media center generally supports learning activities and may be operated with part-time staff. Some technology and learning resources are available. Accommodations for students with special needs are provided when possible. The library is open during the regular school day.	Minimal evidence is provided about the library media program. Technology resources are limited, and accommodations for special needs students are not addressed.

Theme 3 - Academic Excellence: Curriculum and Instructional Practices *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how the school uses technology to enhance teaching, learning, and the administration of school programs. The school or district technology plan addresses evaluation of programs based on student achievement, expanding the depth and scope of the curriculum, and accessing information outside the classroom. Examples include how software and online resources are selected to raise achievement as measured by State Board-adopted standards; how teachers use technology to organize, analyze, and manage student assessment information; and how electronic networking is in place at the school site and beyond.	Evidence shows how technology is used to help students increase knowledge and skills. A school or district technology plan guides procurement and implementation. Teachers use technology to organize student assessment information. Implementation of electronic networking at the site and beyond is nearly complete.	There is evidence that the school or district has a technology plan. Teachers may use technology for classroom management, and planning has begun to use technology to analyze assessment data and expand the curriculum. Electronic networking at the school site may have begun. Computer technology is available to those most interested or most in need.	Minimal evidence is provided that the school or district has a technology plan.

Theme 4 - Academic Excellence: Professional Development

Key Concepts: * long-range, comprehensive professional development plan * comprehensive and systematic needs assessment * subject-matter expertise and effective teaching strategies * professional development plan incorporates the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* (CSTP) * professional development designed to enhance teacher capacity to deliver standards-aligned lessons * knowledge of middle grade student growth and development patterns * professional development plan evaluated on student progress in meeting standards * professional development activities aligned to California standards and frameworks and designed to prepare all teachers so all students reach "proficient" level * teacher collaboration about curriculum, instruction, discipline policies and school operations * support and other certificated staff participate in standards-aligned professional development * all school staff are honored as team members * new teachers are supported by a qualified support network *(Reminder: Discussion questions for this theme are provided in the Middle School Application Appendix.)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence describes a comprehensive, long-range professional development plan for teachers and administrators that is aligned with California content standards and frameworks. The plan describes how available funding sources are coordinated to provide training. The school has conducted a needs assessment of its teachers to determine how to build capacity for a high-quality, standards-aligned instructional program, including subject-matter expertise. Examples show how professional development incorporates the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* (CSTP), is focused on helping **all** students reach the "proficient" level, and includes training on the developmental needs of middle school students. Examples in English-language arts (ELA) and math illustrate the impact of these activities on student achievement.	Evidence shows how a professional development plan is in place for teachers and administrators. A needs assessment has been conducted to determine how to build teachers' capacity to help students achieve the California content standards. Examples show how professional development activities incorporate the CSTP. Examples in ELA and math show how steps are being taken to evaluate professional development based on student achievement.	There is evidence of a professional development plan that will focus on helping students achieve standards. The plan may not be directly linked to improving student achievement.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding a professional development plan. Individual teachers self-select activities based on their interests and classroom needs.
Evidence shows how teacher and administrator participation in training programs, such as Assembly Bill (AB) 466 and AB 75 training if the school is eligible, has helped staff offer a high-quality standards-based instructional program in ELA and math. Evidence shows how the school is working to ensure that every class is taught by staff who have both deep content knowledge and who also can actively use effective teaching strategies to engage **all** students in learning. Examples in ELA and math illustrate the impact of these types of training activities on student achievement.	Evidence shows how teachers and administrators participate in training programs, such as AB 466 and AB 75 training if the school is eligible, to support high-quality standards-based instruction in ELA and math. Examples show how teachers have appropriate content knowledge, use effective teaching strategies to engage students in learning, and have evidence of improved student achievement. Examples are provided in ELA and math.	There is evidence that professional development activities train teachers about how to use instructional materials effectively in ELA and math. The impact of training activities upon student achievement is not addressed.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding teacher or administrator participation in training to support student progress toward meeting standards.

Theme 4 - Academic Excellence: Professional Development *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how teachers, including special education and library media teachers, collaborate as a group to reach consensus about curriculum, instruction, discipline, teacher and program evaluation, school operations, etc. Each grade level/department determines and adjusts the yearly pacing schedule in at least ELA and math. Examples describe how frequent, routinely scheduled opportunities provide teachers with time to collaborate, plan lesson delivery based on assessment data for State Board-adopted instructional materials, share scientifically based educational research, reflect on classroom practices, and confer about specific student challenges.	Evidence shows how teachers collaborate to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, discipline, teacher and program evaluation, school operations, etc. Examples show how there are many opportunities for teachers to collaborate, plan lessons, share educational research, and reflect on classroom practices.	There is evidence that some groups or teams of teachers collaborate to improve curriculum, instruction, and/or discipline. Teachers serve on committees, and efforts are under way to increase teacher involvement in decision making.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding opportunities for teacher collaboration. The principal makes most of the decisions with suggestions from selected teachers.
Evidence shows how teachers, including library media teachers and special education teachers, participate in high quality professional development activities that are aligned with their school's standards-based instructional materials and the school's mission/vision. Evidence shows how scientifically based research is incorporated into professional development activities to improve student academic achievement. Counseling staff, library media staff, school nurses, nutrition services staff, and classified employees also participate in professional activities in their fields. Evidence shows how the professional development is selected, used, and monitored, and how results are evaluated throughout the year. Examples address how all school staff members are honored as an essential part of a team to help students succeed.	Evidence shows how teachers participate in a variety of professional development activities based on the school's standards-based instructional materials. Examples show how opportunities are provided at staff meetings for teachers to share what they have learned, how other staff members are included as appropriate, and how staff are recognized on special staff recognition days during the year.	There is evidence that there are opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development activities, but these opportunities are based on limited school or district resources. There is some discussion of how staff members are recognized for helping students succeed.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding opportunities for participating in professional development activities. Participation by teachers is inconsistent, and funding is not available on a regular basis. There is no mention of staff recognition.
Evidence shows how new teachers are carefully selected, assigned, supported, and monitored with a professional development plan. Evidence shows how No Child Left Behind guidelines are followed. Examples describe how a qualified support network is provided throughout the first two years of teaching.	Evidence shows how new teachers are selected, assigned, supported, and monitored with a professional development plan.	There is evidence that new teachers may lack the support they need to be fully successful. Only some new teachers may be supported.	Minimal evidence is provided about new teachers.
Evidence shows how sharing of student results from one grade level to the next, in at least ELA and math, is a schoolwide process. Examples describe how teachers have regular opportunities to articulate with elementary and high school staff about the students they serve.	Evidence shows how student results are shared from one grade level to the next in most areas, especially in ELA and math. Examples show how teachers have some opportunities to articulate with elementary and high school staff about the students they serve.	There is evidence that student results are shared from one grade level to the next. Articulation activities with elementary and high school staff are being planned.	Minimal evidence is provided about sharing of student results between grade levels, or with elementary and high schools.

Theme 5 - Support for Student Learning: Comprehensive Academic Guidance and Counseling

Key Concepts: * comprehensive support system for guidance and counseling that includes academic, personal/social development, and career awareness * teachers and staff as mentors, advisors, and/or advocates * close, trusting relationships between students and adults * students with attendance, academic, behavioral, or adjustment problems * families and students assisted during transitions from feeder elementary schools and to destination high schools * programs for students from traditionally under-represented groups *(Reminder: Discussion questions for this theme are provided in the Middle School Application Appendix.)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how a comprehensive support system for guidance and counseling includes three domains—academic, personal/social development, and career awareness. Examples illustrate how there is a well-articulated counseling program supported by an active teacher advisement program. Small groups of students are assigned to staff members, such as a teacher, teams of teachers, an administrator, or a counselor who serve as mentors, advisors, and/or advocates for long-term, multiple-year personal and academic support. Examples show how regularly scheduled meetings are designed to develop close, trusting relationships between students and adults, increase student engagement in learning, develop students' study skills, and nurture feelings of self-esteem and belonging.	Evidence shows how the school has an established guidance and counseling program and how it is provided to most students. Examples show how many students have the support of adults who serve as mentors or advisors and advocates. Students are assigned to their homeroom teacher or a counselor to develop relationships between students and adults, increase student engagements in learning, develop students' study skills, and nurture feelings of self-esteem and belonging.	There is evidence that the school has a general guidance and counseling program. Services are available to students on request. Students may be assigned to a counselor or another staff member to increase student engagement in learning or to develop student study skills.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding guidance and counseling services. The relationship between students and adult advisors is not addressed.
Evidence shows how students who may exhibit attendance, academic, behavioral, or adjustment problems are supported within the established comprehensive support system. Examples show how students are referred, supported, and reintegrated through collaboration between staff and families. Written plans are reviewed and revised annually.	Evidence shows how learning support services are available to students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral, or adjustment problems. Examples show how students are supported within an established support system.	There is evidence that learning support services are available to students on a referral basis.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding learning support services available to students.
Evidence shows how counselors and teachers prepare **all** students for a broad range of academic options. Families and students are assisted during transitions from feeder elementary schools and to destination high schools. Examples show how information is provided to parents and students regarding the courses needed for success in high school, preparation for postsecondary education, and career exploration programs.	Evidence shows how many students receive academic counseling to prepare them for a broad range of academic options in high school. Examples include how parents receive information regarding the courses needed for high school, preparation for postsecondary education, and career exploration programs.	There is evidence that some students receive information on career and postsecondary options. Parents may be informed of the courses needed for success in high school.	Minimal evidence is provided about students receiving information on career and postsecondary options. Parents are not informed of courses needed for success in high school.
Evidence shows how students from groups traditionally underrepresented in colleges and universities participate in special programs to support them in completing courses that prepare them for academic success in high school and higher education. Examples illustrate how these programs are successful.	Evidence shows that students from groups traditionally underrepresented in colleges and universities are encouraged to complete courses that prepare them for academic success in high school.	There is evidence that the school encourages students to visit colleges and universities but may not provide courses and support designed particularly for underrepresented students.	Minimal evidence is provided that efforts are taken to support the academic success of students from groups traditionally underrepresented in colleges and universities.

Theme 6 - Support for Student Learning: Student Support Services

Key Concepts: * early assessment and identification of students at-risk and with special needs * student success team (SST) * Title I parent compacts * frequent and appropriate student assessment * English learner (EL) needs met for academic learning and language acquisition with appropriate supports * special education students provided with access to the core curriculum with appropriate supports * extended learning activities beyond the typical school day * after-school tutoring * schoolwide focus on student safety, health, and well-being * expectations for student behavior * bullying prevention and conflict resolution * access to supports for physical, mental, and social/emotional health * partnerships with community service providers *(Reminder: Discussion questions for this theme are provided in the Middle School Application Appendix.)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how the school takes responsibility for active and early assessment and identification of students at-risk and with special needs. Examples address how a schoolwide student success team (SST) and parents identify the ways in which the school, family, and community will help the student to succeed. The school has established meaningful parent compacts with the families of Title I students. Examples describe how interventions and student work are reviewed and evaluated frequently.	Evidence shows how school, family, and community resources are used to assist at-risk and special needs students. Examples show how strategies, such as the SST and meaningful parent compacts, identify how the school and family will help the student succeed. Examples include how interventions and student work are reviewed and evaluated frequently.	Evidence shows that there is a process used by the school to identify and assess students at-risk and with special needs. Individual teachers develop strategies to help students succeed. Interventions and student work are reviewed and evaluated infrequently.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding whether anyone at the school takes responsibility for helping students who are at-risk and have special needs.
Evidence shows how students are assessed appropriately and frequently to accurately depict their knowledge and growth. Assessment of English learner (EL) students is performed in a way that distinguishes the need for content instruction from language development skills. Students with disabilities receive allowable accommodations for alternative assessments as determined by their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).	Evidence shows how students are assessed to accurately depict their knowledge and growth. Assessment of EL students distinguishes the need for content instruction from language development skills. Students with disabilities receive allowable accommodations as determined by their IEPs.	Evidence shows that there is a process for assessing special needs students. Assessment of EL students focuses on language proficiency. Students with disabilities are assessed for special program placement.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding a process for assessing students with special needs.
Evidence shows how EL students receive English Language Development (ELD) standards-based instruction to acquire English language skills, and how assessment of ELs is performed in a way that distinguishes the need for content instruction from limited English skills. Examples address how the (high) redesignation rate of EL students is evidence of provisional success in achieving English proficiency, and how the continued improvement of redesignated EL students is monitored in relation to their English-speaking peers.	Evidence shows how EL students receive ELD standards-based instruction to acquire English language skills, are provided access to the core curriculum, and are assessed appropriately to accurately depict their knowledge and growth.	There is evidence that students are supported in acquiring English language skills and that they are provided access to the regular curriculum.	Minimal evidence is provided about English language acquisition services, although school demographics indicate the presence of English learners.

Theme 6 - Support for Student Learning: Student Support Services *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how special education students are provided full access to the standards-based core curriculum. Examples include how they are transitioned to and supported in mainstream classes, including full inclusion. A credentialed school nurse is available to provide or supervise health services, including specialized physical health care services.	Evidence shows how special education students are provided access to a standards-based core curriculum. Examples include how they are transitioned to and supported in mainstream classes. A credentialed school nurse is available to provide or supervise health services, including specialized physical health care services.	Evidence shows that special education students are provided access to the regular curriculum. There is a process for transitioning to and being supported in mainstream classes. Trained and licensed staff, supported by a school nurse, provide health services.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding how special education students are provided access to the regular curriculum.
Evidence shows that the school provides a wide array of coordinated learning activities extending beyond the typical school day (e.g., summer school, before- and after-school programs, tutoring, extended library hours, homework centers, and intersessions in year-round schools, etc.). Evidence demonstrates how these programs are closely aligned with standards and how students at-risk are given enrollment priority.	Evidence shows how the school provides extended learning activities beyond the typical school day. Evidence shows how these programs are being aligned with standards and how students at-risk are given enrollment priority.	Evidence shows that the school provides some extended learning activities beyond the typical school day. Many of these programs are not yet aligned with standards. Students at-risk may have enrollment priority.	Minimal evidence is provided that the school provides extended learning activities beyond the typical school day.
Evidence shows how there is a schoolwide focus on student safety, health, and well-being. A Safe School Plan (SSP) is reviewed and updated yearly. A full year of health education is required. Evidence shows how physical education is provided for all students in **all** grade levels in accordance with the *California Education Code*. Multiple modules of the California Healthy Kids Survey are administered and results are used to inform instruction and programs. Examples describe how comprehensive programs are in place to prevent drug, alcohol, and tobacco use; HIV/AIDS and STDs; obesity and poor nutrition; and teenage pregnancy, and how the programs assist students in making healthy choices.	Evidence shows how a schoolwide focus on student safety, health, and well-being promotes safety and healthy behaviors. An SSP is reviewed and updated yearly. Evidence shows how physical education is provided in accordance with the *California Education Code*. Examples describe how programs are in place to prevent drug, alcohol, and tobacco use; HIV/AIDS and STDs; obesity and poor nutrition; and teenage pregnancy.	Evidence shows that a focus on student safety, health, and well-being supports safety and healthy behaviors. An SSP is available as required by law. Physical education promoting the healthy student is provided. Some programs are in place to promote healthy student behaviors.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding student safety and health.
Evidence shows how expectations for behavior at school and in the community are well known and accepted by students. Evidence shows how school policies and classroom instruction promote socially appropriate behavior and positive relationships, and include education on sexual harassment. Examples describe successful programs to help students learn non-violent ways to deal with conflict and prevent violence and bullying, and how students' physical, mental, and emotional health is a high priority for all staff.	Evidence shows how expectations for behavior at the school and in the community are communicated. Policies and instruction promote socially appropriate behavior. Examples show how there are programs to prevent violence and how students' physical, mental, and emotional health is addressed with most staff.	Evidence shows that expectations for behavior and ways to promote them are not clearly developed. The value of helping students learn to deal with conflict is addressed, but no formal programs are in place. Students' physical, mental, and emotional health is addressed with some staff.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding expectations for student behavior. Efforts to promote socially appropriate behavior are not addressed. Conflict resolution issues are not addressed. Staff attention to students' physical, mental, and emotional health is not addressed.

Theme 6 - Support for Student Learning: Student Support Services *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how students have access to support services in physical, mental, and social/emotional health to maximize academic achievement. Examples describe how well-established partnerships exist with health, mental health, social services, recreation providers, and law enforcement agencies to coordinate services for students and their families. Examples show how health services are provided by a credentialed school nurse or trained and licensed staff supervised by a school nurse.	Evidence shows how the school works closely with some health services, social services, and law enforcement agencies to provide services to students and families. Health services are provided by a credentialed school nurse or by trained and licensed staff supervised by a school nurse.	Evidence shows that the school is developing a process for coordinating health and social services for students and families. There is limited collaboration with law enforcement agencies. Services are provided by trained or licensed staff that are supported by a school nurse.	There is minimal evidence that the school notifies families about health and social service providers as needed, and that it takes no responsibility beyond that. There is minimal evidence of collaboration with law enforcement agencies.

Theme 7 - Support for Student Learning: School Culture and Engaging the School Community

Key Concepts: * culture of energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to a standards-based system so all students achieve standards * school supports students' growth and development * school promotes students' connection to school and community * extracurricular and co-curricular activities connect students to school and community * school develops and reinforces character traits * effective programs prevent violence, bullying, and promote conflict resolution * two-way communication with families * families and community contribute to school success and support student learning at home * comprehensive understanding of the community * cultural diversity is valued * collaborative partnerships support student learning * service learning strategies and connections to careers and community * school facilities reflect the importance of education in society *(Reminder: Discussion questions for this theme are provided in the Middle School Application Appendix.)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how the culture of the school reflects energy, enthusiasm, and a commitment to a standards-based and aligned educational system where **all** students can and will achieve grade-level standards. Examples illustrate how the commitment to standards-based instruction is demonstrated to and by staff, students, and the community in a variety of ways.	Evidence shows how the culture of the school encourages all students to be academically successful, and how the school is committed to standards-based learning. Examples illustrate how this commitment is demonstrated to and by staff, students, and the community.	Evidence shows that the school culture reflects a desire to help students succeed. Work on standards-based learning is in the beginning stages.	Minimal evidence is provided addressing standards-based learning. The school's primary focus appears to be classroom management and curriculum coverage.
Evidence shows how the school supports **all** students' growth and development in social, emotional, and physical domains, as well as academics. The school has created a culture of peer support that pushes each student to do his/her best work.	Evidence shows how the culture of the school encourages student growth and development in social, emotional, and physical domains, as well as academics.	Evidence shows that the staff of the school is just beginning to be aware that the social, emotional, and physical domains are important to student learning.	Minimal evidence is provided showing that the school promotes students' growth and development.
Evidence shows how a successful system is in place to ensure that **all** students are connected to the school and community through the academic program, academic competitions, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, student leadership activities, clubs, sports, service organizations, and service learning, etc. School-sponsored activities are tied to the schoolwide vision of success for **all** students. Evidence shows that most students participate in these activities and their participation reflects the diversity of the school.	Evidence shows how the school works to connect all students to the school and community through the academic program, academic competitions, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, student leadership activities, clubs, sports, service organizations, and service learning, etc. There is evidence that many students participate in these activities and their participation reflects the diversity of the school.	Evidence shows that some students are connected to the school and community through competitions or extracurricular and cocurricular activities. Students who qualify are encouraged to participate in school-sponsored activities. The activities have open membership and tryouts.	Minimal evidence is provided that school-sponsored activities are connected to academic learning. Participation often follows a pattern determined by students' peer and social groups.
Evidence shows how the school develops and reinforces positive character traits, such as caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness through a systematic approach that includes adult modeling, curriculum integration, and school policies and practices. There is evidence of positive interaction between students, teachers, and school staff. Examples show how effective programs prevent violence and how bullying prevention and conflict resolution programs are working successfully. Examples show the staff is knowledgeable about and committed to promoting a comprehensive youth development program.	Evidence shows how the staff as a whole promotes and models positive character traits and how programs, policies, and procedures are in place to prevent violence and bullying, and to help students deal with conflict in a non-violent manner.	Evidence shows that individual teachers and staff promote and model positive character traits. The importance of bullying prevention programs and of helping students learn to deal with conflict is discussed, but formal programs may not be in place.	Minimal evidence is provided that positive character traits are promoted or modeled, or that the school is proactive in preventing violence and bullying.

Theme 7 - Support for Student Learning: School Culture and Engaging the School Community *(continued)*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Evidence shows how the school has many proactive strategies to promote effective two-way communication with families and community members. Parenting/adult education classes are offered to support student learning. Communication is conducted in students' home language(s) as appropriate. Family and community members are offered a variety of options for contributing to the success of the school, and many routinely participate in daily activities.	Evidence shows how two-way communication between the school and home is encouraged. The school advises families about how to support student learning. Communication is conducted in students' home language(s) as appropriate. Some family members regularly volunteer at the school and serve on committees that address both academic and nonacademic issues.	Evidence shows that the school periodically initiates communication to families about issues and events using traditional methods and responds to inquiries. Families participate in fundraising, extracurricular activities, and parent-teacher organizations. Occasionally, families may serve in advisory roles to offer opinions on policy decisions.	Minimal evidence is provided regarding school to home communication and parent involvement. Some families participate in fundraising, extracurricular activities, and organizations, but they are not encouraged to play a role in decision-making.
Evidence shows how the school has a comprehensive understanding of the community it serves. Examples describe how strategies successfully engage the interest of families as well as other segments of the community and involve them in school activities; how the cultural diversity of families is valued and demonstrated in a variety of ways; and how the school enjoys a high level of support in the community.	Evidence shows how many independent connections and activities involve families and the community. The school is developing an ongoing, systematic approach for using those resources. Examples include how the cultural diversity of families is acknowledged and supported.	Evidence shows that there are efforts to accommodate families and community members who offer to participate. Outreach activities for parents and the community may only be in the planning stages, or initial strategies may have just been implemented.	Minimal evidence is provided that the school is aware of the importance of engaging its community.
Evidence shows how well-established collaborative community partnerships provide substantive support for expanded student learning experiences through monetary, personnel, and material contributions. Evidence shows how the partnerships have had a positive impact on student learning, improved student performance, and provided opportunities for students to contribute to the community through service learning.	Evidence shows how the school has some school-community partnerships. Examples show how one or more of these–in addition to providing monetary and material support–expands student learning and provides students with opportunities to contribute to the community.	There is evidence that the school has a few partnerships and is developing others. The primary purpose of existing partnerships is to provide monetary and material support to the school.	Minimal evidence is provided that the school is aware of the potential for developing school-community partnerships.
Evidence shows how district and community resources are provided to ensure that the facilities and campus are clean, in good repair, and reflect the importance of education in society. Examples also address how all school environments are stimulating, educationally appropriate (classrooms, program spaces, school office, etc.), promote a healthy environment, and reflect pride in school and student efforts.	Evidence shows how the campus is clean and in good repair, how repairs and maintenance are completed as district resources permit, and how proactive efforts are ongoing to find supplementary community resources. Examples show how classroom environments are stimulating, educationally appropriate, and reflect pride in school and student efforts.	There is evidence that the district and school are exploring resources to make needed repairs or to enhance the facilities. The condition of the campus and classrooms may not meet high standards for cleanliness, educational appropriateness, community support, or school pride.	Minimal evidence is provided that the school and district make needed repairs or enhance the campus. The campus and classrooms show evidence of graffiti, disrepair, and neglect, and they lack community support and school pride.

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California Learning Resources Network. *http://www.clrn.org*

California Technology Assistance Project. *http://www.ctap.k12.ca.us*

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*. http://www.eric.ed.gov*

Gateway to Educational Materials. *http://www.thegateway.org*

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